

REWRITE



The Magazine of Effective Writing

Vol XI No. 6.

JUNE, 1951.

Twenty-five cents

PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR ARE NOT ALIKE

There is a marked difference between professional writers and those beginning or inexperienced writers, who seek to compete against them. Sometimes this differential is a matter of materials or treatment. But often it is more likely to be discernible and clearly marked in the approach of the writer to his job of writer and salesman. Every person is in some respects unique, but nevertheless we all tend to fall into patterns easily picked out by the veteran student of a particular field. If we are willing to be teachable in this one respect, we can quite frequently increase the latent potential of our results.

It is of course hardly necessary to repeat the old saying that the amateur writes, and the professional writes for a particular editor. Yet this is an approach to writing of vital importance, and one that it takes the inexperienced writer a long time to comprehend. For it is one of those half-truths an author does not fully understand until he is selling. And sometimes it may be years that he toils on industriously before he casts a backward glance and notes the distinction. A principle, however, never becomes alive and part of one's equipment until he consciously thinks it—through. You may take in some general conception, but until you study the specific exemplification of it step by step all the way through, it is not part of your mind and heart and imagination.

That is another difference between the amateur and the professional. The latter always is painstaking and he appreciates more fully his own shortcomings. Realizing them, he really does something about them. The inexperienced writer may be too proud to admit them, afraid that he will lose face with his family or other writers if he admits to being still an apprentice and feeling it necessary to learn more about his job. You see, I am using the words "professional" & "amateur" in the best sense. There are lots of men and women who sell a goodly amount, and yet remain essentially amateurs. By professional I really mean, I guess, the imaginative, industrious, ambitious writer who doesn't always know all the answers, but who "handles himself well" and excites the admiration of other writers and editors. He is in a word, a writer's writer.

Let's go back for a minute to that job of writing for a particular editor. It doesn't mean slanting in the narrow meaning of that over-used word. Rather it implies you study a market you would like to hit and then put the best darn ms. you can down on paper according to the requirements you have summed up in your mind. You may not be 100% right, but you get a good idea and then handle the

treatment as professionally as you can. You could probably do a better job ten years in the future. But you have only the equipment at hand now and you will be judged on that. Therefore, imagination, enthusiasm and sincerity are everything. You try to be original within the limitations of your medium. I recall the first big feature article I ever did. I had been writing reviews for the *Boston TRANSCRIPT*. One of the editorial men on the paper suggested I go up and see the feature editor and suggest that I'd like to do an article on a certain subject. I did; and he told me to go ahead. He looked as if he did not believe I could possibly pull it off. I wrote the piece all right, but muffed it because I ran into a problem in editorial ethics and jurisdiction. A man on the reporter-staff news staff was doing a spot story along the same subject. I was so green I couldn't team up with him so our stories wouldn't conflict. I was professional on the writing-amateur in the selling.

A professional learns the difference early between the newsy or timely story and the generally interesting yarn that is good any time. And he learns to stay away from those stories whenever possible, merely because he wishes to be published, not bought and filed away in moth balls in inventory. Once I worked with a potentially big name writer—who consistently wrote off-trail stories. A short story told from the angle of a colored handy man, obviously, does not employ as good strategy in selling as it might. (Tom Wolfe and one of our students at Durham subsequently sold stories angled that way respectively to the *POST* and *COLLIER'S*. But in both these instances an exciting story, and a prestige name were backed by a controversial theme at a time when racial tolerance was a front page subject of interest.)

The professional learns the strategy, and tactics of building into every ms. a number of strong reasons why an editor ought to feel impelled to publish it. And generally speaking, he avoids making these points hinge on some special premise, such as Christmas, that dateline that comes but once a year, and so rules the story out for 11 months. Often, a very little thought will increase the sense of urgency in a ms.

Closely paralleling this idea is the similar one of putting emotion into every story or article or poem you write. The professional studies long and carefully the subtle art of projecting emotion, so that the reader feels as if he were actually experiencing the emotion of each scene. The professional has learned the trick of capturing warmth & intimacy. Partly he does this by using warm, intimate words. But more especially he gets his effect by writing skilful, natural dialogue and action. He imitates life, but this

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Published Monthly by
Writers' Counsel Service, 50 West Street,
Lunenburg, Mass.

<u>MAKE</u>	<u>William E. Harris,</u>	<u>CLEAN UP</u>
<u>THE U.N.</u>	<u>Elva Ray Harris,</u>	<u>AMERICAN</u>
<u>REALLY WORK!</u>	<u>Editors.</u>	<u>POLITICS</u>

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"GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD"...

The real decision in the "Great Debate" is a moral issue, not one of foreign policy. We Americans must choose between the high moral standards and spiritual aims of the General on the one hand and the political chicanery and downright immorality of appointed and elected officials in all ranks of public life. Of men and women drawn from every political party. America is at a crossroads. Our very system of government is on trial & there is no turning back, no squeezing away through the tall grass of compromise from a clearcut decision. Either we shall demand a higher standard of loyalty to the common good, or we shall continue to endure the contemporary floor of filth, and eventually achieve a lower and dirtier one.

Perhaps these sound like harsh words. But they spell the truth. Jesse H. Jones, former head of the RFC, recently said: "Corruption in government effects the pockets of all taxpayers (of everyone. Ed.), but far worse, it affects the morals of a people and lowers their respect for government." Respect right now for government is at its lowest ebb for many years. It rests upon the American people to clean their house completely, to demand an honest dollar's worth of value & much wiser spending for every tax dollar. We must distinguish between essential defense spending and immoral extravagance and waste. Most of all, we must teach our Congress, legislatures and lesser public officials that limitations on spending are not their own capacity to appropriate, which is endless, but the people's lack of patience in the face of unbridled abuse of power.

Not only at home, but abroad the American people must be better bargainers, demand more for their money on the side of moral order, of higher standards for creative living for all God's creatures. No race of men have ever worked so hard or given so generously and freely in the cause of better living for so many in all parts of the world. But giving, appropriating in the sense of setting up an honorable and worthy project is one thing.. Executing it, carrying it through to completion is another. It can't be delegated.

Practically all of the world's trouble is due to the unwillingness of the "haves" both at home and abroad to share with those, who "have not". Everywhere those who have given generously, are looked upon with scorn as a race of "Uncle Shylocks". Americans hitherto have been too trusting that the spontaneity of their neighborliness and goodness of spirit would be interpreted—as intended, & also that others would do unto us as we felt we were doing unto them.

We need to go back and reclaim that Yankee character-trait of shrewdness, the ability to drive a hard but just bargain. "I'll do this, if you will do that." We assumed a wily, grasping Asiatic race such as the Russians would be as transparently open-faced as ourselves. We assumed that all other nations would be as eager and as capable of governing themselves as we. And that those having possession of the reins of power would be devoted to the cause of liberty. This in spite of watching the moral decay in the French in almost a single generation.

Our foremost necessity for survival is to bring to the surface our tremendous spiritual resources. We have been talking proudly about Freedom, Liberty, Equality, but we've not been aggressively seeking to perpetuate them either at home or abroad. We have been willing to settle for something much less inspiring and earthly within the axis of our enemies' disbelief. They know what they want and are willing to fight like bullies for it. But they are bullies; they have only crude, raw power on their side. Wherever we've met them with equal power supported by spiritual high principles, we have whipped them. We have allowed them to throw us on the defensive simply because we were not ready, didn't believe in our own faith sufficiently.

Bombing Manchuria or even knocking blazes out of the China mainland may work a temporary tactical advantage for us, but it won't win the war of ideas and ideals for us. Only arms supplemented by strong moral integrity and genuine love for the exploited, betrayed Chinese and Russian people will ever accomplish that. Our task is not to build an American empire, but to create a family and neighborhood of free peoples. We must be willing to work for it, dream of it, believe in it. MacArthur gave us the credo in his great speech. If he also roused our moral indignation, he may have saved the human race.

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FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

THE POET'S WORKSHOP

There was a gratifying response to the Workshop this month. Fifteen poets demonstrated their willingness to help a fellow poet. It is heartwarming to realize that so many poets are willing and anxious to help each other—to help their competitors! For poets are in a very competitive profession. Whatever else may be said about the world going to the dogs, it is a hopeful sign for civilization when one person will speak out, frankly from the bottom of his heart to aid others with whom he is engaged in serious remunerative competition. It should be encouraging to Mary Iothrop to know the spirit with which these contributions were made. A typical remark accompanying the comments was—"It's so easy to see what is wrong with someone else's poem. I do hope someone will—do the same with me."

Here is the poem we are discussing:

SEDATIVE

June laid her smooth, hypnotic hand
Upon my troubled brow,
And all the irks of yesterday
Are unremembered now.

To recall those vagrant memories
I try—but try in vain;
For naught can I remember
Of April's searing pain.

Mary Iothrop

There was quite a bit of duplication among the comments, or should I say, agreement? "Irks" was the most discussed word in the poem. Nine of the 15 poets pointed it out. Only one person defended it, saying, "Irks" is a noun manufactured out of a verb but it has a freshness because of that." Substitutions were suggested by several other poets: "griefs", "pangs", "strain", "wounds".

"Naught" was the next most mentioned word. Five people commented that it was stilted & "poetic". A few poets criticized the use of "troubled brow" as being trite. One person kindly pointed out, "It's trite, but cannot think of a better substitution." Another poet suggested "fevered brow". I would disapprove of that change because it is trite also, and has the overtones of physical sickness. As I interpret this poem, the author's talking about troubles of the spirit or the mind.

There was a difference of opinion concerning the merits of the title. Two people liked it. Joseph Murrey Emms said it was excellent and Blanche N. Cole that it struck a responsive chord. Three contributors disliked it; Jean Hoyt Smith for the reason that "for any

trained nurse 'Sedative' is likely to offer too many unpleasant connotations." Bessie Glen Buchanan suggested "Nirvana" or "Forgetfulness". Bessie H. Hartling wrote: "I don't like the title, nor the word 'hypnotic', in connection with the lovely month of June. It suggests a temporary respite, somewhat evil in its influence." There were others too, who did not like the word "hypnotic" in this poem.

Some couldn't accept the idea of April bringing pain, or even "irks". In this northeast part of the country, April is the month you wait for all winter. In March, you force forth, April's golden promise of spring, in the house to help you realize that April is really going to come with its blossoms, and occasional sunny days. Other poets asked the question, "Why does she try so hard to recall searing pain? Why doesn't she try instead to forget it?" Blanche N. Cole says: "I question the use of 'vain' as Webster says: 'Producing no good results'. It seems it would almost be like a lament not to be able to recall 'April's searing pain'. Using 'again' in place of 'in vain' shows the joy the author feels that she at last is really living—in the sunshine again and has put all doubts & fears behind her."

Bessie H. Hartling and Mary Grant Charles agree that the first stanza was the better. Emma S. Jocke and William C. Morrison spoke out even more definitely with the comment—that the first stanza was enough. It's well to point out here that if the second stanza were dropped, the "yesterday" would no longer refer to "April" and the ideas to which, please note, objections were made in the previous paragraph, would not appear in the poem.

But these were not the only criticisms of the second stanza. The two inversions there were noticed: that is, lines 5 & 6, and the one within line 7. The missing foot in line 7 was commented upon by Stanley M. Kenney. A handful of people thought the rhythm in the 5th line could be improved. Though technically speaking, it is a perfect iambic tetrameter line after the pattern of lines 1 & 3, with the exception of one extra short beat, in the first foot. Lillian Stickney suggested substituting "to summon wanton memories". Alma Steele proposed "For June's erased the memory". Both of these revisions eliminate, of course, the word "vagrant". William C. Morrison wrote: "It is difficult to identify—'vagrant' memories with troubles, irks & searing pain". Of course, "wanton" is akin to "vagrant". It was the rhythm Mrs. Stickney had in mind when she changed the line.

Mary Billings objected to the chain "unremembered", "memories", "remember". Too many like words for eight lines. Blanche N. Cole probably had the same idea when she suggested substituting "forgotten" for "unremembered". Emma S. Jocke thought "unremembered" a good word. There are times when a series of

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like words can be very effective. Such repetitions were one of Shakespeare's favorite devices. But the trick is to build up while you are repeating. "Remember" as it is used here is anticlimactic. But if "unremembered" came after it instead of preceding it, we'd have a repetition that would also build.

Joseph Murray Emms stated that this poem "has a lot of food for thought" and she was not alone in her opinion. Mary Billings has done some thinking about it and has come up with a revision which seems to me to retain the spirit of the original poem and yet also avoids all or most of the defects, which Workshop readers objected to. Here it is:

June laid a flower-scented hand
Upon my troubled brow
A hundred irksome winter days
Are unremembered now.

Cherries are white upon the hill,
And dogwood in the lanes,
I see no farther, looking back,
Than April's slanted rains.

Mary says: "I tried to keep April & June in this poem, but these other things got in also. So it is quite different and the title, alas, no longer applies. I couldn't seem to get rid of the 'troubled brow'. If it were my poem, I think I'd call it 'Curtain'. Or, perhaps, 'Rain Curtain'."

Thus, fifteen people from Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Mass., Indiana, Penn., and California have joined in a workshop panel, to help a fellow poet. Help is still coming in, and though it has been received too late to be included in this discussion, it's being forwarded to Mary Iothrop.

Here is the poem for discussion in August. By a member, incidentally, of last year's UNH Conference group. It will be appreciated if this year's group should pitch in and criticize it for him.

THE WAVE IN THE STREAM

By William C. Morrison

Boy at the stream a day in March
sees strange waters flex and arch;
a day and night of rain on snow
makes brook a thing he doesn't know.
Bent where he sprawls for summer angle
is inches under ripples' wrangle;
the stepping stone is two feet under
a wave that churns with an eerie thunder.
For boats he tries a twig and a mashed
candy wrapper, and sees them washed,
first up, then under and out of sight—
he strains to follow with all his might—
and then, far below, at the brook's last
turning
they float in view. He feels a yearning
submerge his being like the noise
of the rushing falls and the fresher's
voice.

New Policy. We are now paying \$1.00 per poem for all poems used in the Post's Workshop. You need not be a REWRITE subscriber in order to contribute, but every poem you enter must be accompanied by a comment on the current workshop poem. We select these (1) for merit and (2) for their ability to stimulate discussion. To the degree that we discuss & often disagree, we learn more about technical problems and gain imaginative insight.

Please send comments on a separate sheet. This enables me to send the criticisms on to the poet concerned without having to make a fresh copy. Lack of space often requires me to summarize the criticisms in these pages, but the full analyses are forwarded to each author.

Deadline on the above poem is July 5. Get them in sooner if possible, please.

CHARITY IS A COVER FOR INERTIA

This is the time of year when letters are received in the mail pitifully begging money to send boys and girls from broken homes and the tenement districts of our cities to camp. We at REWRITE are heartily in sympathy with such projects as Boys & Girls Camps, Inc. of Charlestown, Mass., and Morgan Memorial, not to mention many other equally outstanding organizations, carry through. But reading the lists of well to do citizens, politicians, etc., who lend their names, and often many hours of time to these institutions, I often wonder what would happen if these men and others would devote as much effort to a campaign for eradicating the slums, instead of merely seeking to ameliorate the misery, crime and broken lives they cause.

As REWRITE has often pointed out, in that field lies a great opportunity for writers. If every writer would paint the paradise in which all men might live; if he would write only once in a lifetime of the adventure of building a better world, and would knock only once the abuse of human rights caused by man's inhumanity to man and the worship everywhere of property rights, most of the iniquitous troubles and unrest of this world, I believe, would vanish in thin air.

CLEAN OUT YOUR MIND REGULARLY

Elva has adopted a motto: "Throw something out every day." We are both appalled by the amount of useless (for us) examples of "the written word" that flows across our desks.. The second and third class mail alone could crowd us out of the house in a few years. In all this material, however, there are a few grains hidden among the chaff.

I am becoming increasingly convinced that many writers' inability to write is caused, or premised primarily by confusion. The great need is to organize, file and eliminate. If a writer will do that, he will clarify, intensify and crystallize his urge to write.

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IMPORTANT MARKET NEWS

STORY, Whit & Hallie Burnett, **STORY PRESS**, David McKey Co., 225 Park Ave., NYC 17. The long pending plans for this quality magazine have now been formulated. The magazine will soon be published twice a year in book form—"STORY '51" will appear in October. And also "Sextet", a book of **STORY** novellas, will appear in January, 1952. This is the first, presumably, in a series of **Story Press** books to be published under the joint imprint. **E. P. Dutton & Co.** formerly printed **Story Press** books, so the new set-up represents a change in the backing publisher. **David McKey Co.** is an old firm under the new management of **Kennett I. Rawson** and **Quentin A. Bossi**.

FORD TIMES, Pauline Syler, 3000 Schaefer Road, Dearborn, Mich., reported for the editors recently that "We are out of the market for material at this time. Incidentally, we are scheduled through December, and have an extremely heavy stockpile, so that we'll be purchasing very little until fall. (May 3. Exclusive.)"

St. Anthony's MONTHLY, Rev. William J. Philipps, SSS, wrote to us, "We purchase very few mss., for much of our space is devoted to articles & stories concerning **St. Joseph's Industrial School**, Clayton, Dela. When we do buy, we pay 1¢ and up a word for prose, 10¢ per line for verse. Fiction should be 800-2,000 words. Address: as above, **The Josephite Fathers**, Epiphany Apostolic College, Newburgh, N. Y. (May 10. Exclusive.)"

Fr. Philipps added the comment that many writers send mss. which need correction. He admits to being prejudiced in favor of mss. which do not require such editing. Nota bene.

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KEEP IT BRIEF

HERALD OF HOLINESS, Stephen S. White, Nazarene Publishing House, 2923 Troost Avenue, Box 527, Kansas City 10, Mo., published one year ago a column editorial titled "Cut them Down". He quoted Prof. Roland E. Wolseley, a Judge in the Associated Religious Press contest for editorial writers, as saying "Anything much over 300 words is long." (He further used the words "concise, logical, vigorous, or pleasing" as a goal to shoot at.)

Mr. White himself added: "One of the most difficult problems which I have to face, in my present job, is what to do with the long poems and articles. Cut them down, brother, sister, cut them down!"

YOU CAN'T DO ANY BETTER WRITING

The President's assertion that no one desires controls for himself, but only for the other fellow, is, in the face of the uncontrolled federal budget, an insult to the intelligence of the American People. Greatest single cause of inflation is the willingness of the Truman administration to deflate the value of the American dollar by creating new debt and refusing to take care of the old. A nation never achieved anything but the slavery of its people that way. An adequate defense and reckless waste or extravagance are not two sides of the same coin.

The only way to curb the cupidity of politicians is (1) to pile their desks with letters of protest and (2) to vote them out of office. Do it now! Write today! Every week!

A PROGRESS REPORT

The **PROTESTANT WORLD**, Betty Hudson, asst. sec., 381 4th Ave., NYC 16, is a Protestant national newspaper, not a magazine. Started publication in January as a monthly; went to semi-monthly in April and will go to weekly as soon as conditions warrant. Feature stories are incidental and must be tied into a news-peg angle. Thus it is not a good opening for free-lances except for occasionally timely pieces. "As time & resources allow, we intend to establish a network of local correspondents on a space basis, but have done this only to a limited extent up to the present time. Promotion and the job of organizing news channels established in the denominational groups & agencies has taken much of our time and energy."

"Our feature stories are generally tied to a news story or to a local situation, which will stand development because it has broader application."

We believe that in spite of the "negative" quality of this exclusive report to **REWRITE** that there is a real chance for the writer, who is willing to help a growing newspaper. Under such circumstances editors welcome any practical help and are usually grateful.

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THE MONTH'S NEW BOOKS

WRITER'S GUIDE & INDEX TO ENGLISH. Porter G. Ferrin. Scott, Foresman & Co. \$2.75. Now in a revised edition, this is a comprehensive, fully documented book for use in composition courses of college grade. It is a bit difficult to use, but an end paper that partially takes the place of an index, and a list for references to particular author and their material used, is helpful.

THE BEST OF OUR YEARS. Ed. Edwin I. Brooks. The Story Book Press. \$2.00. This is a collection of short newspaper filler previously published by 5 writers in a miscellany of newspapers and small magazines. (The editor has been helpful in sending us reports about markets.) The rippled paper used is not the easiest on much used eyes.

NEWS AND COMMENT

Arts of the Theater Foundation, E.F. Kook, 6 West 77th St., NYC, in answer to our routine check, announces that the 1950 awards, the second annual competition, will be published "sometime between the end of June and the first of August. Competition will start as of the date of announcement of the winners, for the 1951 awards.

It is an ironic comment upon the informational reporting of our time that, perhaps, the greatest story of our time, is being too often ignored by our editors. I refer to the attempts of our government and the UN to develop those backward areas where almost 1150 millions of people live. Properly administered, the Point 4 Program or Technical Cooperation Administration, to give it its official title, is the most romantic and enduring battle we are waging for universal peace. We need constantly to check its efficiency and to see that it never descends to boondoggling. But the more war lays waste the face of the earth, the more important it becomes. It is nothing less than "a systematic attack on the vicious circle that keeps two-thirds of the world's population too poor, too enfeebled, and too backward to produce adequately, and too unproductive to overcome without help, the poverty, sickness and ignorance holding them down." America cannot single-handed do all the work. But as we help other nations, to help themselves, we will build a "better" world and insure the defeat of Communism. A great theme for writers to exploit.

Buy **ALL** your books through the **WRITERS' BOOK CLUB.** You get valuable Book Dividends and at the same time make yourself a better writer by helping to build a better writers' magazine.

The **WCS Circulating Library** (\$2 per year, plus postage both ways) enables you to read most of the best books on writing at a small cost. Many writers use this as a test of the books they intend eventually to buy. Thus, the library saves them money.

BOOKS OF PERMANENT WORTH

THE CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY. Richard Summers. \$5.50. One of the most practical books on short story technique and the background of being a professional writer.

ARTICLE WRITING & MARKETING. George I. Bird. \$5.50. Companion book to the above. Exceptionally helpful. The author's students are selling. Both of these texts are standard in advanced courses on professional writing.

COLLIER'S BEST. Ed. Knox Burger. \$3.00. One of the best and ablest edited books on fiction for the big slicks. Burger who is **COLLIER'S** fiction editor, has written an introduction that every writer should read. You will understand your market and editors the better for doing so. The foreword to each of the stories, which in themselves are useful to the freelance, afford an interesting insight to the author's approach to his writing.

WRITING YOUR POEM. Lawrence John Zillman... \$2.75. The first new book in several years, covering the technicalities and craft of poetry writing. A **WRITERS' BOOK CLUB** Selection.

I SELL WHAT I WRITE. Jules Archer. \$2.50. A very practical and helpful book, because the author tells just how he went about selling a wide variety of articles & stories. He is frank about his failures, explaining why he missed the mark. A **WRITERS' BOOK CLUB** Selection.

THE WRITER'S BOOK. Ed. Helen Hull. \$4.00. A large & wide selection of articles on practical writing & selling by members of the **Authors Guild.** Here are selling writers telling how they do it.

THE ART OF READABLE WRITING. Rudolph Flesch. \$3.00. The author has made an exact science of the business of saying what you mean, getting the most meaning out of the simplest and briefest combinations of words. This was a **WRITERS' BOOK CLUB** book when it appeared.

WRITING FOR CHILDREN. Erick Berry & Herbert Best. \$2.50. Recommended for the past 2 years at Durham, it has proved very popular.

CREATIVE FICTION WRITING. Dorothy McCleary. \$2.50. A practical book by a quality writer of fiction in both the short and long field of publishing.

"WRITERS ON WRITING"

This handbook by members of the staff, at the **UNH Writers' Conference**, including Bill Harris' two chapters on the Short Story and the Writer and Agent, was two years old the first week in May. It has sold very well. I can recommend it highly as an all around and very practical book. Many schools, colleges and teachers and the like use it as a textbook. It costs only \$3.00.

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WHY GO TO WRITERS' CONFERENCES?

I am a strong believer in writers' conferences. Not because you will learn to write, or sell, in ten days. You won't. But rather because you pick up so many handy ideas and often contacts with a variety of persons who may be useful to you later. Among the students you may run across someone who is expert on some subject you are interested in. Or you learn about a source of information. All the chance possibilities for miscellaneous profit are latent there, which always exist when you step out of your rut and stimulate yourself by external contacts.

If you only learn how not to do a certain number of things connected with writing and selling, a conference pays for itself. But I think a conference is valuable because it gives you a perspective on yourself. Watching other writers, or listening to editors, you learn some of your own shortcomings. It is a chance to accumulate experience rapidly. And it is out of a full mind and stimulated imagination that your ideas most usually come. The "hot" writer is the one with such a head of steam, so many ideas that he is constantly generating more ideas.

Some professional writers feel they can't afford the time. Others are above studying. They are professionals, aren't they? It is true absorbing ideas and talking about what you do for a living is fatiguing, and sometimes makes you go dry for a time. But that is a natural process--my old ideas of filling your pitcher so you can continue to pour from it. Every person's situation is an individual one. He must arrange his affairs to the best advantage of himself. But I've seen few writers in a busy life, who wouldn't receive benefit from a refresher at a conference, or just the opportunity of living intensely and closely with a varied assortment of their fellows for the few days required, let's say by the average writers' conference or some similar get together. I have seen a lot of stuffed shirts come to conferences, & over their drinks ridicule the yokels, club women and other types of amateurs "who want to write". I have seen professional writers and editors who did not think writing could be taught, admit that they themselves got a lot more than they gave.

You know, that art of being teachable, of absorbing the good that lies all around, is one of the rarest gifts of God to man. Most of us go through life blind most of the time to the amazing creativeness of the universe. We are so impressed with our own importance or the need for impressing it upon others, & the task of fulfilling our small projects, we overlook the other, larger ones that are everywhere waiting to stir us. They are forced to hit like a ton of bricks before we're ready and willing to open our eyes and sub-conscious to take them in. Writers' conferences are a good substitute for that sensitive insight that is so often "asleep".

HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Here are the acceptances reported to us in the past month:

Virginia Sievert

Poems: THIS DAY (May)

Lucile Coleman

Poems: Wesleyan Methodist, AM. FRIEND & PROGRESSIVE FARMER, QUICKSILVER

S. Brainerd Vinton

Filler: FARM JOURNAL.

Thelma Carleton (Canada)

Feature Articles: THE COUNTRY GUIDE and WINNIPEG FREE PRESS WEEKLY. (3)

Carrie Esther Hammill

Poem: GRADE TEACHER, (2), LIFE TODAY.
Articles: CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES.

Kay Lill

Juvenile Story: LITTLE FOLKS.

Arthur I. Center

Articles: OPEN ROAD, NATURAL HISTORY.

Neomi Ingalls

Article: POPULAR GARDENING.

Beverly Harris

Article: Vermont LIFE.

Frances Durland

Article: DAILY MEDITATIONS.
Stories: FORWARD, David C. Cook Pub. Co.

Rebecca Phillips

Story: St. Anthony's MONTHLY (May-June).

Note: send in your record of sales. Editors tell us that they read this column. We know that some agents do. And many writers, interestingly enough, make "rebound" sales, because they see what editors are buying.

SOME NEWS AND COMMENT

On other pages this month we have written about the others mean than war by which the free world is fighting Communism. We believe this is a great 'teen age theme. Youngsters are idealistic and its their world tomorrow.

The League of Vermont Writers, Mrs. Louis F. Dow, 155 Cliff St., Burlington, Vt., July 17-18th. That's a good bet if you're around there. Good talk, nice crowd. Fun.

Canadian Gov't. Travel Bureau, D. Ico Dolan, Ottawa, Can., is a source of much factual and background material.

Rep. Joseph R. Bryson, So. Carolina, filed a bill (H.R. 3589) recently to amend the Copyright Act of 1909, so that it will save authors against infringement by the use of a recording device or transcription, and other modern methods of communication. Good!

REWRITE

WHAT SHALL I DO ABOUT THIS?

Frequently writers complain about markets not being open to the new, the inexperienced or the unknown writer. But I have seen a number of writers look down their noses and, to change the image, kick a good potential, an opportunity to write for an audience out of the window. Too many writers judge every "market" by one of two extremes. Either they accept every opportunity to rush into print or they spurn any that does not pay a rather high rate. In one case they use no judgment or discrimination; in the other they're too discriminating.

The set-up for this kind of error in what might be called the strategy of selling, is particularly obvious in the juvenile field, where many religious magazines demand unusually good writing, but often pay less than \$4 per word for material that may have cost a lot of time in painstaking research. Under such circumstances I do not blame writers for feeling a sense of outrage. But the overall picture is what counts. Did a sale, let's say, at that low rate attract a better paying editor's attention? If so, it may have been worthwhile.

You have to take into account a number of angles. Does the sale get you ahead both in prestige and money? Can you afford to write for such low pay? Can you afford not to? In some cases even a check for \$2.75 can pay a guy's food bill for one day and look mighty good to a hungry stomach. Whereas from some other writer's viewpoint it is an insult, & should be returned unceshed. It makes a lot of difference, too, whether the editor has a tough job to survive. Or whether he appreciates a writer's position and worth. The editor who pays a low rate, but gives a writer an opportunity to sell a number of mss., or to work up into longer lengths, is sometimes paying off "in kind". He is giving an author a leg up to better markets than his, for which the writer should be profoundly & eternally grateful.

In the final analysis you have to figure, not only in terms of little red and black items in your account book, but also in that abstract medium of the human equation. One writer we know has been receiving checks at a lower figure from a new editor than those she received from the preceding editor. Why? Are present inflationary conditions the motivating reason? Is the present editor trying to make a good reputation with the front office? Does this editor actually have any say as to how much will be paid? Some editors do not, and it is a sore point with them, when they see spendthrift editors offering writers they have developed more money than they can afford to offer. After all, you know, a magazine has to be filled. If an editor has spent all his budget on one spectacular ms. he's got to retrench across the board, perhaps by reprinting or paying the rest of his authors a pittance.

Particularly in the higher brackets and the more commercial avenues of publishing there is a lot of "squeezing" done. And that is a form of athletics that agents can often perform better than a writer because (1) knowledge of the inside facts on both sides is a prerequisite for successful squeezing; and, (2) the agent being essentially a commercial chap, he can bargain better than a writer.

Bear in mind, however, that there can be a squeeze that is ethical, and others that are decidedly not. There is a difference between having a man-to-man talk with the boss, and telling him you think you have earned a better day's pay, on the one hand; and holding him up with a gun on the other. Suppose you are writing for a low pay editor, and presently begin to click with his competitors at a better rate. It's perfectly legitimate to tell him there is more money and prestige across the street. You squeeze him to pay at the same rate as does his rivals. But suppose you find he is honest with you; he cannot physically pay more. What are you going to do—kick him in the teeth and walk away? Or continue to write for him when you can & also be friendly because of his help in earlier days?

The kind of squeeze that we do not tolerate and no editor likes is the one where an author makes exorbitant demands on an editor, such as higher pay, better billing, more publicity, etc., etc. Me-me-me-first stuff and loyalty only to the highest bidder. The author or editor who does that, counts himself out of the picture very rapidly. Reputations have a way of spreading along what is politely referred to as the grapevine, so that even competitors won't bid for the services of a guy like that. Within a year, we have seen several writers, and one editor at least, make use of other persons' ideas for personal profit, financial or otherwise.

Sometimes you have to stand up for rights and sometimes you can stand up for them too hard. We ran into an interesting problem in a recent letter from a writer. She was trying her hand at a decidedly off-trail type of material, and, strangely enough, found an actress who wished to make use of it. Author was inclined to pass up the opportunity because the actress wanted to buy the material outright. We counselled the author to go along on the deal, because she was enthused about the medium, but would be extremely in luck if she found any commercial editor interested in the material. But we also counselled this writer not to accept an outright purchase; we suggested she try to keep that material in her own hands, but help the actress. There was the kind of opportunity in which a writer sees no immediate gain. But if a writer is willing to experiment and practice, he sometimes prepares the ground, and unlocks a door he could not see or expect to open. The main thing is to be alive & creative. God will make the opportunities.

REWRITE

STORIES ARE MORAL CONFLICTS

One of the defects we notice most often in the short stories we read in ms. is a failure to make the reader see the human values involved in the situation. It is not enough to tell a story, or even to give the proper characterization. The reader desires to see clearly in his mind's eye the psychological and moral values. Even in the pulpiest pulp story we ardently wish to see the good triumph over evil. It can be seriously argued, I think, that every story contains to a certain extent the inevitable and well nigh universal clash between good and evil. As we make this (1) visible and (2) convincing, we add greatly to the pleasure of the reader.

Let me illustrate by referring to a story I read recently. Purposely, I shall attempt to blur the specific plot in order to place greater emphasis on the situation and those universal values that appear only if several writers can apply the principle to their own stories. For that is what we try always to do in discussing stories in REWRITE; the value lies in bringing out the underlying & basic principle, which all writers can thus use in revising their own stories.

Briefly, the story concerned a girl's uneasy mind when she realizes that she is not in love with her fiancé or the man strangely enough, who has cleared her mind for her in an unexpected and casual wooing, lasting only a few days during the course of a trip across the continent. Now this is a dramatic reversal of a deep and supposedly tender relationship. It happens that the odd man is a knave purely interested in satisfying his own material ambitions and gratifying a momentary outpouring of personal vanity. This does not vitiate a true basic theory that any such situation is a highly complex one. The reader will obviously wish to see the relations between all of the characters explored rather thoroughly. Whatever the girl decides to do is going to affect not only her own life, but also those of the two men.

Now what actually happened? The author to a fairly vivid degree etched in the realistic details of the physical background. She made us feel the uncertainty of a young woman shaken by the unsettling experience and realizing that she is only just awakening—in terms of her emotional life. The author did not make us feel, however, the complexity of the situation: the girl's responsibility to her fiancé, the advances and retreat from the new lover. Oh, yes, we did see the girl worrying in the privacy of her mind, reflecting about the situation. But as for the overtones and implications that should have abounded in every scene, they simply weren't there.

The author contented herself with long ineffective scenes that developed the doubts, the fears and "come-to-realize" rationalizations of the girl. But the pull of the alter-

nating desires on the girl simply never did get dramatized in the scenes with the handsome Hollywood lover.

Actually, the fiancé never appears in the story. He doesn't need to, although some of the conflict could be greatly tightened up, if there was some indication that the fiancé loved his sweetheart and would fight to keep her. A letter or telegram from the fiancé at a moment when the villain was exerting hard pressure on the girl would dramatize the two forces pulling on the girl's emotions. That is the secret of good story-telling: to alternate the positive stimuli of the forces, not by having the MC reflect about them, but through their appearing in definite, specific scenes between the characters. Suppose, for instance, that the Hollywood glamour boy was in the midst of his act: urging the girl to go to Hollywood and take a screen test. A parlor car porter appears—with the telegram from the fiancé. The girl looks at it, says her fiancé loves her, wouldn't want her to be a screen idol.

The talent scout would immediately try to drive a wedge between the sweethearts. "What about you?" he would ask. He'd tell her that a girl had her own life to live; if she allowed a man to dominate her and crowd out a natural and necessary right of self-expression, love would soon fly out the window. A nice guy, you see, the wolf, just considering her interests with no thought of his! A girl would have to react to that. The reader would certainly wish to see that. So, we are led on to the next scene: the girl parrying the scout, seeks the wise old lady in the next chair. Oh, dear, she wails, I have never had a chance to really live. I do not know whether I want to be a screen actress, but I'd like to have time to find out. The old lady comforts her, but tells her she is the only one who can live her life for her. And then the wolf comes fawning again. And so with increasing suspense the reader gets drawn on and on, right up to the climactic, dramatic moment when the scout refuses to do a good deed and a courageous one. His choice is the mean, selfish, materialistic one instead of the unselfish, idealistic one. The heroine sees the light, makes her own decision. She knows that she loves her fiancé & that life with him will give her the awakening to life that she craves, and which her spirit needs. Decision through action.

But do you see the difference? Now we are concerned with the inner realities. The overtones and implications of every act of all the characters in relation to each of those others he or she rubs up against, are shown and used in live scenes for a strong editorial purpose. The author knows clearly what she thinks about these characters and what will surely happen in certain exigencies. But he keeps hands off and lets the characters run themselves into the ground or win the readers' respect. But now it is character & action under fire that count. Not looks.

REWRITE

TWO FILLER MARKETS

"Favorite Gloom Chasers", JOURNAL OF LIVING, Room 1116, 1819 Broadway, NYC 23. Under this heading the May, 1951, issue printed 9 recommendations by famous people as to how successfully to combat the blues. Pay's \$5.00 for each item "selected for publication."

Family Problems, AMERICAN Magazine, 640 5th Ave., NYC 19, pays \$25 for each item (under 500 words) that is used. (May issue.)

More "Betting Average" notes:

Carrie Esther Hamill
Article: BIF & SPUR.

Helen Langworthy
Article: The State JOURNAL (Mich.)

Gift to Bill and Elva. When we were closing up this issue, there arrived a handsome, much appreciated hand painted "bridge table" set of linens. (This is Bill's masculine, & probably "all wrong" description.) However that may be, it was done by Carrie Esther Hamill and was the gift of the Adult Round Robin Group, which also includes Florence M. Davis, Winona Nichols, Helen Langworthy & Stanley M. Kenney, in "appreciation for—everything both of you have done for all of us."

We are very grateful for this fine, kindly act of 5 members of the WCS Family. It's the kind of unexpected surprise that makes teaching such a wonderful job.

It's sometimes asked what is the WCS Family? How much does it cost to belong? Every person who reads REWRITE or works or shares with us the job of writing is a member. No dues except the responsibility of giving as much as you get.

Mrs. Tore B. Holmstrom is "Opening" winner.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES, Frances W. Marks., 1018 So. Wabash Ave., Chicago 5, Ill., told a contributor recently (Apr. 25) that "We've all the October-December, inclusive, verse, that we can use, with 2 additional Halloween poems left over (for next year)."

Key 111, this year's winner of REWRITE'S Award of Merit, tells us that the write-up, which she got as a result in her home paper, inspired a local housewife to brush up on her typewriting by becoming a volunteer typist. (Key's handicapped by poor eyesight. Now Key can spend all of her limited work day on creative writing entirely. Wonderful.)

Writers' NEWSLETTER states that CBS-Television now refuses all mss. from unknowns. Prefers to deal through an agent, but will, it's said, accept for screening by its readers mss. from professional writers or newspapermen. That is what the reckless, abusive amateur and the greedy chiseller has done—working a hardship on the honest & aspiring new writer with talent waiting to "show".

THE BIG LEAD ARTICLE

In the big slicks one hard to get article is the "lead article". These aren't usually done by inexperienced writers. Often written on assignment, the initial idea is sometimes suggested by a writer or an agent. Or again, it evolves from a number of editors, an agent and writer kicking a subject about and discovering the specific method of handling a broad general theme.

At any rate, here is a very good discussion of the "lead article" and its editorial characteristics, requirements, etc. It appeared in Writer's NEWSLETTER (May 1 issue).

"These are, of course, distinguished from all the other articles by their elements of universality and/or topicality and/or controversy. They are the ones which support a cover blurb and can be utilized early in the body of the book and can be made the central items or specific issues that other features serve to round out and counterbalance.

"Generally speaking, magazines prefer to have a lead piece have not only current application, but some of the quality of a debate or an expose as well. Lengths (for RED-BOOK, the particular magazine under analysis in the article): 4,000 words and up; payment ranges from \$1,250 up. Jack Danby, articles editor."

Sign of the Times. The WRITERS MONTHLY is no longer being published. High cost of materials and printing.

QUICKSILVER, Grace Ross & Mabel M. Kuykendall, 4429 Foard St., Fort Worth 5, Texas, a new address and management for this quarterly devoted to poetry. "We would like to receive short poetic dramas, lively social vision poetry, portraits, ballads—poems that come alive with the startled reader. No restrictions on form or subject matter. Long poems will sometimes be used. Favorite quotations on technique. Pays in Prizes."

Postage Refund. We feel that the least we can do for those WCS Minute Men who help us to report the writing business, is to repay their postage expense. So, when writers report authoritative news or information, tips, etc. on markets, editorial changes of policy and so on (backed wherever possible by an authentic and official documentation) we're refunding the writer's mailing expense. It's just another proof of REWRITE'S serious and determined effort to get you the most accurate data we can. We are always very grateful to those many writers, who act as eyes, and ears for us. Even though it is just practical self-interest for them to do so because someone else's tip may be the mainspring of of their next sale.

A chap sent us a ms. a while ago about an assortment of unusual characters he had met. I suggested he concentrate on one of them. He did and made a sale to THIS DAY. (3 left!)

REWRITE

(Cont'd from Page 1)

is for a definite, objective purpose. He is not content merely to imitate, to achieve a perfect transcription of life. He chooses a scene because it "proves" something when it is hitched into a line of several scenes. An analogy that will perhaps illustrate what I am saying is that of a train getting ready, let's say, to pull out. If you come down to the station and see a line of cars arranged all hit-or-miss, each of the cars may be perfect specimens in themselves. But a caboose hitched next to an engine, followed by mail cars, milk tanks, parlor cars and a service car just don't make sense. The average person can tell a freight train from a passenger train, but many writers fail to make the same distinction in hitching up a train that represents a complete sequence of ideas, or scenes.

Seriously, few writers pay enough concentrated attention to this matter of meaning. They have only a vague idea of why they use one scene as against another at a particular point in their story, or why they give it a special emphasis. They choose the viewpoint in a rather haphazard manner. If part of a writer's job were to be called upon the editorial carpet and explain why he'd told the story in the special way he did, many writers would dissolve in tears. For they would appreciate how badly they had told a story. They would also realize for the first time, what gulf there is between the raw amateur, on the one hand, and the competent professional on the other. The latter may have the poorer imagination, but he knows how to put a train of fictional or non-fictional cars, figuratively speaking, together so that the sum total means something.

One of the basic changes for the worse in our educational system is that nowhere does the student get a thorough training in logic. And logic is the very core of telling a story. For the reader listens step-by-step. He says: "Yes, and then...Yes, and what happens next?" But let the author slip in just one illogical premise. The reader immediately pounces. "Oh, but you said the MC had no legs. Therefore, he could not run up a ladder and rescue the princess." In a fairy tale perhaps he could, but for the most part the author is writing realistic fiction or feature articles today. He's got to make it be logical.

Logic in its simplest form consists merely of reasoning that because two statements are true, a third is also. Susie has a cat. Billy has a dog. Therefore, Susie and Billy will fight. I have illustrated the idea deliberately with a "theorem" that indicates, within limits both the principle and the illogical quality of a conclusion that is not closed in with watertight expertness. Logic can only be achieved by the kind of drill—continued practice—that makes a good spell. But we don't get that today and only an occasional author is willing to pay the in-

evitable price in self-discipline to possess it. Yet a story is always a testing of a human character. Johnny wants to go to a fair. But he also ought to go see his grandmother on her birthday. Which will he do? The story shows him making the decision. It's happy in its ending when Johnny does the right thing; doubly happy if he wins as reward the attainment of his ambition, in a logical and convincing manner. That largely is the difference between the inexperienced and professional writer. The latter sets up a story so it sticks. He also sells it in a business-like manner. He makes it stick on the practical side as well as the technical. He is familiar with his markets, makes it attractive to each editor he aims at, as against a long gamble that the editor may like a general ms. put in an envelop and thrown wildly in his direction.

(Cont'd from Page 16)

Now here is the prize Opening:

"Scott Iambrix looked across the living-room at his wife, Audrey. She was young, dark-haired and incredibly lovely. Vibrant & healthy. But she was going to die soon. (Ambiguous.)

"It will have to be very soon.

"He was vaguely aware that she was chattering on as usual. Her next words nagged him to attention. 'Scottie, listen. I was asking you about your first wife. What was she like?'

"Irritation, long smothered, festered to the surface. 'Why must you always ask questions? She's dead—let her be. I didn't love her.'

"She spread her hands apart in a familiar gesture. 'Scottie, why did you marry her?'

"He had an insane desire to tell her—the truth. For the same reason I married you, you fool. For money.'

"He crossed the room and took her hands in his. 'I don't want to discuss it. Let's talk about you. And your trip.'

"Soon. Soon." (Mrs. Tore B. Holmstrom, N.Y.)

This is just conventional commercial stuff. It does not thrill me. It does not particularly appeal to me. But I recognize it as good in kind. Notice the short sentences, & swift pace. The dialogue is good. Coming only when it is needed, it heightens the narrative drive. It is almost a physical feeling of release for the tension in the reader.

Observe how the reader participation gets increased by the skilful use of viewpoint. A single viewpoint, yet the reader isn't limited to Scottie's mind. We get a perspective on his thoughts, but also the warm intimacy. Our sympathy is with Audrey, but we see more than she does. We watch fate moving on.

REWRITE

WANT PRACTICE? THE "PROBLEM" STORY IS GOOD

The "Problem" story is a good one for the unknown writer to break in on. Not all editors go for it wholeheartedly; yet like the murder mystery, it is recognized as a basic pattern. If you study the cross-section and variety of any average big slick, you'll notice that problems are always stressed in a blurb, and that the out-and-out problem story is a frequent type. If you can do a good problem story, the editors will keep an eye on you.

Modern fiction today is apt to be topical to a degree. It follows the seasonal trends of course. But it also ties in with what is taking place in the day's headlines. Sometimes you wonder how a writer and an editor were able to strike it so hot. Remember, it usually takes at least 3 or 4 to six months to get a story into print after it has been selected. Of course, some big news stories, like the Kefauver Committee, throw a shadow ahead of them. But others, such as MacArthur's dismissal and the repercussions there-to do not.

Sometimes it is a writer's or an editor's hunch that makes for a lucky break. Oftener it is a case of reading the signs aright or thinking ahead of the crowd and the world. A writer is smart who watches what people are discussing; what ministers preach about and little people write letters to the editor about. For in those subjects lie the themes, and the cores of stories. All you have to do to work them up in terms of a problem.

That is where many inexperienced writers, I have noticed, fall down. At the point the "situation" is glimpsed & plotted. Few stories write themselves, or appear full bodied. It takes a keenly analytical mind and a vivid imagination as well as liking for the task of placing specific people in generalized situations. For instance, we are hearing as I write this a lot about the disloyalty of public servants, who have used positions of trust to make personal profits. To a fiction writer the situation might suggest a number of different problems.

One obvious one would be that of the honest official who is caught in a squeeze position. Being on the inside he can see what is going on. Joining the gravy train men is repugnant to him. But should he keep silent and not raise a finger in protest? Will it do any good for him to betray his colleague or colleagues? Can he do it without danger, physical or professional? Can the story you envision be out of the great, complex political whole cloth? Can you separate this, man's story, yet keep it a universal theme, not let it degenerate into political gossip and one special "true life" incident?

Perhaps this will illustrate the amazingly complicated series of acceptances and rejections, the selection, eliminations & in-

tensifications that a writer has to engage in in order to come up with one short story. It is a problem in itself that requires a deal of thinking through and clarification. Your job is to isolate the problem, then make it crystal clear, and show its ramifications— from all sides while preserving the unity & impact of a single viewpoint.

Let's go back to that "problem" of one of Truman's administrative aides (to indulge a bit of imagination based upon the insinuating press references to mink coats and lavish vacations and RFC loan hotels. The initial technical problem would be, could fiction handle such a theme? Would any ordinary writer know enough about the inside to give the story the authentic color? Could it become universalized enough so it wouldn't be a special instance? Getting over that difficult hurdle, could you next use the "best" characters to exemplify the problem, & what would be your theme? What would you wish to prove?

Obviously, you would have to bring to bear on the honest official the two conflicting, tension-building forces of pressure. To do this you would have to isolate these forces in terms of individual characters. An ambitious wife, perhaps herself unconscious of, and innocent of any wrong doing; the immediate superior who is willing to play the political "game" because everyone else does & someone else will, if he doesn't. Perhaps a senator or some other background character, who will balance the real directing force above the "superior", the man who knows what kind of a political "play" is to be put over.

That brings us down to the beginning plot development. How will it be screwed up to a peak of interest? A problem implies a practical and specific issue; what is the special bit of action that is to test the hero? Will it be the matter of approving a man on the side of the Gang, who will be under the honest official, but will be in a strategic position to betray the people? Will it be a story similar to the Mayor O'Dwyer case, in which a man in a key position is kicked upstairs to get him out of the way of embarrassing questions? Perhaps the honest official knows that while he has done nothing discreditable, his promotion is to get him out of the way. Therefore, his willingness to be whisked out of the way is tantamount to being an accomplice to the enemies of the people. He must choose between conscience, and a pay-off, between courage and ignoble servitude, venality.

This is an unusually "difficult" fictional problem. Many authors would probably decide it is "off trail" and to heck with it. Yet in essence the questions a writer inevitably must ask himself regarding it are as basic as the actual writing of any story. A writer must determine the issues. That's why any problem story is such good training.

REWRITE

NEWS AT WCS HOUSE

On the last Sunday in April we enjoyed an afternoon visit from Winona Nichols and Isabelle Freeman, who drove almost 100 miles to talk over some problems with us. Our rolling hills were just beginning to don spring finery. A day or two later our cherry trees and Japanese quince were in full bloom, and Billy 'Geet' gang of kids were busy trying to capture a few of the hundreds of bees in an amazing collection of screw-top glass jars. No swollen eyes reported.

The last week in April also saw Elva, assisted by Bill, swing into action to judge a series of poetry awards for our good friend, Mrs. Blanche W. Keyser and the Pennsylvania Poetry Society. Due to a misunderstanding as to the closing date, Elva, whose analysis table happened to be loaded, had scheduled a reading for the following week. However, by routing a long night letter through Worcester (Fitchburg had closed down for the night) we made the deadline.

As we go to press our vegetable garden is ploughed and numerous of Elva's early plantings are well started. Bill's seedling trees planted last spring all came through the winter. This year we added a few peach trees & doubtless amused the neighbors by planting a selection of asparagus roots in pelting rain.

We look forward to a visit from our friend, Dolores Cairns, the poet, in a few days.

The Problem of Letter Size Envelops. Some friend recently called our attention to the fact that our smallest outgoing envelop can only be addressed on a standard typewriter. That is something we've known for a longish time, and intend to fix the next time we re-order, which is practically at once. But as those writers, who send out thin mss. in the government envelopes, realize that the return envelop is a source of annoyance to editors and the author himself? The envelop most of you use is too small to hold the usual business letterhead paper, or more than one or two sheets of ms. Result: the editor has to cram the ms. into the envelop and he gets a black mark for additionally creasing the ms, not to mention sealing the envelop so as to stick the envelop to the ms. Thus, when Mr. Author opens his reject, he tears the ms. to bits and has to retype it.

This is just a technical detail which every author ought to clean up for editors.

Key Bill (See also: P. 10) was married on May 4th to Elbert Eugene Hubbard. We wish a lot of happiness to both of them.

"News Service" Syndication. There are increasing numbers of authors setting up as a "news service" with a view to syndication of other writers' material. While each project should be judged in its own light, and we've mentioned one or two of these, we don't rec-

ommend the idea generally. The reply of one of these services indicates clearly why the practice cannot be approved wholeheartedly. "We buy the item outright, and re-edit it to suit our requirements, if it complies—with our needs. This re-edit is done by one person, our editor." (My first question is the use of the word "re-edit". What does such a word mean? Where has an original ms. previously been edited?) To my way of thinking, a set-up such as this can very easily degenerate to the point where a writer isn't writing under his own name. On the contrary, he is simply doing rough drafts for the editor to polish and resell under his own by-line. That may be all right for a rank beginner. I would not want it for myself or any student writers of my acquaintance.

Some of these boys are using a "news service" title as a handle to build themselves up in the eyes of an editor. (I wonder if it does!) And as I read the various trade, professional magazines and other outlets where such organizations get themselves listed, it occurs to me that some of them are indulging in too much space-grabbing, object: a "free adv." to keep their name before the public. I'd think twice, if I were you, before aiding such forays on editorial space.

It's like sending an agent out to editorial offices to sell your ms. It's fine, if he has a good reputation, and can dig up an assortment of markets unknown to you. But if the agent has a reputation for sharp tricks and habitually urging his clients to let his "steiff" edit, polish, or even collaborate—for a consideration over and above his usual 10% commission, do you think it is going to enhance your reputation with editors of high standing to be seen in such company? It is the same way with these "news services". If the guy is an incompetent, but sends out the ms. with your by-line over his blue pencil-work, do you think it is going to help you? Will it make COLLIER'S or some lesser magazine want to reach for the big stuff, which you market yourself?

Don't misunderstand me. You can learn the business of writing from a chap who has the experience and the know-how. It may well be worth the price of selling outright instead of on percentage; or of letting the "editor" have the by-line. But you need to know just how long it's wise to be an apprentice, and whether your master craftsmen really is that and what editors think of him. You can't afford to have your character references or the handles to your name tarnished in editorial minds through association with knaves, incompetents or just well intentioned "second raters". Editors don't mean to be snobbish, but they are influenced unconsciously by signs and actions. The author who always takes pains, turns in a good job, and works alone or sends an Al agent to represent him, is the writer whom editors tend to depend upon. And it's the same when you get yourself a syndicate. Get a good one!

REWRITE

THE MS. MARKET FILE AND YOU

Every month, no matter how busy we are in other directions, the CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE continues to grow and collect up-to-the-minute information about markets. An ever increasing amount of this data comes from the good minute men writer friends, who supplement our reading of all the writers' publications by sending into us original letters and memos or even rejection slips from editors. (We return these after copying, whenever requested.) These writers realize that this kind of cooperation is one of the best ways to get practical, inside information. A tip some other writer passes along, may get them their next sale.

More and more, we are doing an expending, often exciting job of reporting the writers' ms. market. A letter from an editor about a new magazine suggests a check up on its requirements and progress six months later. A generalized rejection slip mentioning vaguely the reason why the ms. was sent back, offers a chance to get an exclusive statement of policy and current requirements from the editor, something few writers could extract.

Editors are cooperating generously. Aware of the aggressive policy of REWRITE in trying to bring writers and editors closer together and to eliminate some of the impossible and time-wasting mss. sent to them, editors in nine cases out of ten go along with us wholeheartedly and generously. This puts us in position to save writers' time equally and also cut down their postage bill. Serious writers do not need to shoot blindly at the wrong market or one that is over-stocked.

Independent research and analysis of market information on file here at WCS House is the cornerstone of our work with the File. A day does not go by that we do not write for information to some editor, or classify the data already available. We are steadily increasing the categories, bringing under one heading groups of magazines and listing one magazine under several headings, such as articles and fiction, fillers, cartoons, humor and the like. Wherever a type of writing or an author shows up, we begin to classify.

Duplicate Subscriptions. A number of subscribers have taken advantage of our method of enabling them to cut and file REWRITE. If you wish an extra copy sent to the same address, just remit \$1 for a year's supply.

Back Copies. A lot of writers outside the WCS Family have been buying back copies, on a 10 copies for \$1. basis. Subscribers also have been sending these bundles to their friends. We can quote special prices on the larger runs.

Sample Copies. Tell your friends. 2 for 25c.

Don't Forget to Renew Your Subscription

I have gone into considerable detail about the File because it shows (1) how you, too, can build a file, if you have the patience; and (2) how important is your contribution, when meshed with ours and those of hundreds of other writers. No matter how small, your crumb of information helps us to check upon others, or enlarge our growing encyclopaedia of market facts. All we demand is accuracy and a knowledge of the timeliness. Note how increasingly we are dating all our news about magazines and editorial requirements. This is to give you the fullest possible overtones and implications. It helps you a lot to know exactly when an editor reported himself as being overstocked. He might not be, by the time you read the note. Or you fairly reliably can gauge the time he is apt to be back in the market.

Finally, this CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE has been built up for you. Remember that it exists and is always here, like your library, ready to serve you. Tell your friends, when they have a knotty market problem, to write in and ask us about it. This winter as never before, we have been able to make practical suggestions to writers, and have watched them translate these into tangible sales. It has been exciting for us and very pleasant for the writers. It has made an actuality of that old slogan, earn while you learn.

Charges for this information? Well, naturally, it costs us money, a lot of money and time to maintain and increase the effectiveness of the File. But we like to operate it as nearly as possible as a public service. A number of the other writers' magazines have cooperated by sending us two copies so that we can cut up and file their market news... For that reason alone, we do not wish to commercialize on the help and courtesy extended to us.

Therefore, our charges for market news or information are very informal. We have been in this business long enough to be able almost on sight to detect the "free rider". A serious-minded writer, however, need not be afraid that we will soak him or try to sell him a lot of advice or merchandise he doesn't need. Remember that although we originate a great many sales for writers, we are not agents and do not charge agents' fees. Many times we exchange market tips freely with a writer who asks us the answer to some puzzling problem and is kind enough to tell us a bit of news. Our interest lies in getting the good and necessary job done. More, we never discuss our WCS professional work, beyond a general reference such as this, in REWRITE.

More often than not, we sidestep the matter of a fee for market data by suggesting a writer give whatever he believes satisfactory to our WCS Scholarship Fund. In that way he helps not only himself, but some other guy worse off than he, and us. That man of Galilee was a firm believer that as you give, so will it be given to you. Modern man doesn't seem to have invented a better philosophy.

REWRITE

ONE THING AND ANOTHER

Lots of editors are very considerate: Miss Frances Marks, CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES, wrote to a writer not long ago, taking time to explain that checks go out the first of month on which an article is scheduled. She also added into this writer's check two articles she is holding for future publication. How is that for a "pay on pub." magazine!

Cur thanks to Mrs. G.A. Neulty, Southwest City, Mo., who sent us a quantity of Commemorative stamps to be sold for the benefit of the WCS Scholarship Fund. The latter aids a considerable number of handicapped or shut-in writers every year. It is a revolving or help each other fund in the sense that money returned to the Fund is used without any deductions, to help other writers worse off than those repaying sums that are never considered as obligations. Thus, the recipient of aid can share in the good works of a family fund. The Fund, thanks to the generosity of friends, returns by recipients of aid and a few small gifts by Bill and Elva, has dispensed quite a few hundreds of dollars & also much more in intangible morale-building to a fairly large number of writers.

HOW LONG SHOULD YOU WAIT?

This is a question that is often asked. I know of no simple, universal answer. Critic-agents will tell you, let me do it for you and do the worrying. That is a very appealing siren song that many writers fall for & end up by paying fairly large and continuous reading fees, for which they get no results and no practical instruction. Writers needing to know the right answer the most, aren't the kind, who can be handled profitably by a good agent, and the other kind are not a satisfactory answer to the central question.

The best answer lies in an accumulation of personal information about editors. You can say that an editor should be able to answer in 4 to 6 weeks. But do you brush your teeth in exactly the same way or time that Sister Evelyn does? I'll bet you do not. Every editor is a person. Some editors have a business-like system; others are short-handed. A difference of several days or weeks can develop—very easily. Individual circumstance work a difference in the same office. If it is overstocked, the ms. may come back by return mail, and you immediately think it was not read properly. And similarly, a decision may have to be made between two equally acceptable mss. I have seen a ms. in such instances rejected, then called back, perhaps months later.

It is a game of hide and seek for a large stake sometimes. If you can guess correctly what is going on at the editorial office, a letter very different from the usual polite or blustering, "You've had my ms. 10 weeks. What the heck is going on?" may result. I'm a firm believer in getting to know editors.

SOME MARKET NOTES

YOUTH, Herman C. Ahrens, Jr., Evangelical & Reformed Church, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, 2, Pa., (formerly UNITED CHURCH YOUTH) Mr. Ahrens in an exclusive letter to us says:

"YOUTH is an experiment in religious publications for young people of high school & 'teen age. We specialize in the 'newspaper' approach, meaning that all our articles are newsy, concise, and appealing in an everyday approach to the young person in our nation. We carry in addition to our regular religious or church articles, such materials as puzzles, cartoons, humorous but meaningful poems, an occasional fiction piece, and newsy feature articles of all types with interest to young people. We have just raised our top rate to 50¢ a hundred words, and since page area is limited, we are particular about the material we use.

"Like all editors, I am always searching for fresh, alert young writers as well as the older experienced ones. Anything you can do to guide such writers to us will be appreciated."

The CRESETT, 875 No. Dearborn St., Chicago 10, Ill., is a literary journal (Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.) It doesn't pay except in one contributor's copy. But Mary Moon, who was published in it, says both the "format and the excellent copy make it satisfying to be included in it."

PEOPLE ARE THE SAME EVERYWHERE

Some time ago we had an interesting letter from Mrs. C. E. Wallin, 17 Grenfell Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks., England, about Writer Circles Summer School, 1950. Except for the regularity of afternoon tea, it sounds very much like Durham, N. H. "The chief impression was the wonderful sense of comradeship & helpfulness, the levelling of all barriers. Among the lecturers were men and women, now at the top of the tree in their lines. Yet most of them stayed the whole week and anyone at any time between lectures, and group discussions, could buttonhole any of the "big noises" and have a friendly talk about some special individual problem." (That's the way it should be, always. Ed.)

"My only criticism was that at the Brains Trust spontaneous questions were asked from the body of the hall. This produced, I regret to say, some very futile moments. There was a tendency among tyros to take this opportunity to be offensive in their reference to a number of editors as well as the profession in general. And to couch their "questions", if they could be called that, sometimes in a borderline tempo on the edge of abuse." The phenomenon has been seen on this side of the Atlantic, too. No way of getting even is so well calculated to disqualify a writer from magazines he wants to hit. You've got to be "big enough" to write professionally.

REWRITE

REPORT ON THE FICTION WORKSHOP

The Fiction Workshops brought in a sizable flood of both mss. and letters commending in no uncertain manner the plan for giving you some specific help through analysis of mss. Through the coming months we shall try to develop the idea so that it will help more of REWRITE'S readers as fully as possible. Remember, though, these workshop discussions, will be only as good as the contributors of mss. and helpful criticisms make them. They are your chance to help yourselves and your colleagues. We can do the teaching, but you must do the writing that will give us something to chew on.

Contest No. 3. The best Dramatic Scene of 150 words or less used in the August issue. Closes: July 10th. We will pay \$1 for those we use. (See special note below.)

Contest No. 4. The best Article Opening. A prize of \$1 for each one used in the September issue. Closes: July 25th. See below.)

Special Requirement. Beginning with Contest No. 3, all entries to all contests must have, as an accompaniment, a criticism of any one of the published mss. You can pick the contest, including the first two. But everyone who seeks analysis of his own material must be willing to help the others. This will be good for the individual writer, because the mere task of criticizing someone else's material, will make him more careful with his own.

Note: there will be no contest in the October issue, which has to be written immediately after the UNH Conference, when there is a shortage of time and energy. We'll resume our Fiction Workshops in the Nov. issue when the summer distractions are over. The subject will be announced in plenty of time for you to prepare.

The Story Opening Contest. There were almost two dozen openings submitted for award no. 1. We discussed some of them last month we will comment on others this month. Most of the openings lack punch from one or more causes. Either the MC and the problem aren't set up sharply enough, so that the reader is not clearly told what the basic premise is; or the style is too leisurely, the story is not definitely started within the first 150 words, as it most certainly should be. Your average editor is much stingier with words. He wants an absorbing, interesting character to appear at once, and something to happen or hang over the MC right from the first sentence.

Another thing: never assume that your editors can't count up to 1,000 and multiply. If they can't, the linotype machine will do it for them. You can never jam a 3,000 word story into a 1,500 word space. We received a ms., "Al's Ambition", which we planned to use until we counted up. It was marked "approx-

imately 150 words". But the actual count was 391! I know of an actual case where a kindly editor was fooled that way. When he took a look at the galley sheets he was so mad he ordered his acceptance to be cancelled, and he told his readers no ms. from that author would be accepted in the future. A number of writers sent in openings from stories they'd previously written. All right, so long as a ms. did not exceed 150 words. When I said 150 words, like any editor, I meant 150. (Actually, I was being lenient because many professionals get started in 125.) It isn't part of the rules that I should pick out the 150 words from a longer ms. Several ran over.

This ms. illustrated one serious weakness. In the first 160 words it was an amusing opening: the story of two boarding schoolers on the prowl off campus for a couple of attractive town boys. It would have been better if one of the girls had been MC, the other her confidant. The sad part, however, was that at around 170 words, when the boys were introduced, the omniscient author spotlighted the boys, so that the emphasis was spoiled, and the line of interest broken.

Another serious defect in many of the beginnings we read was a tendency toward introspection. The less of that you can manage—the better will an editor like it. Thinking is not action. It is passive. A story ought to get underway like a firetruck responding to an alarm. Lots of excitement, tingle and dread.

Now for some specific comments on the mss. One ms. by Mary Billings that we almost used, contained some vigorous writing. A girl on a strange uncle's door-step at night has some curiosity value, but no direct problem. Good action, too. Ariel hears him struggling to open three "stubborn locks" on a similar number of doors. "A small ceiling light reflected on his bald head and silhouetted his slender, bent figure." (Good picture.) "His voice dropped steadily halfway through every sentence...as if the air in his lungs—were leaking away through a puncture." Again, the character is made memorable. (This particular sentence in the original is very wordy. It needs polish.) But the total effect isn't strong.

Helen Langworthy turned in an opening the title of which had a strong reader pull. It is called, "The Kitten That Flew". Weakness lay in the method of telling. It was a told story. "Maybe it was only weeks that we waited for Miss Miranda to have her kittens. The morning came, finally, when Jack tore up the basement stairs." "While we were breakfasting later, Jack asked—" "If I'd known all that would happen because of a winged kitten, then perhaps I'd not have been so"—Do you see what those phrases do in pulling the interest down? Perhaps the story should be told after it happened, but at least a secondary present could be intensified by polishing and sharpening those phrases.

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